

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 171336Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8549

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 3747

EXDIS

3.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MASS PFOR JO US SA

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

1. KING WAS IN TOUCH WITH ME SHORTLY AFTERNOON JULY 17.

2. HE TOLD ME HE NOW WANTS TO ISSUE "COMMUNIQUE" TO HIS ARMED FORCES SAYING THAT JORDAN IS ACCEPTING THE AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT FINANCED BY SAUDI ARABIA. HE ASKED ME WHETHER FROM MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION, HE COULD DO THIS AND MY ADVICE ON WHETHER OR NOT HE SHOULD DO SO NOW.

3. I RECAPILATED FOR HIM THE SITUATION AS I UNDERSTOOD IT(A) THE SAUDIS HAD ASKED US CERTAIN QUESTIONS IN JIDDA (B) WE WERE IN THE COURSE OF PREPARING REPLIES (C) I DID NOT YET HAVE THOSE REPLIES IN AND (D) ONLY HE (HUSSEIN) KNEW WHAT SAUDIS HAD TOLD HIM THIS WEEK END ABOUT A COMMITMENT TO THE SYSTEM. HE SAID HE WAS IN NO DOUBT ABOUT SAUDI COMMITMENT AND HE THOUGHT THAT HE SHOULD TELL HIS ARMED FORCES WHAT WAS GOING ON AND ALSO THAT SAUDIS WOULD BE PLEASED BY THE TEXT OF THE COMMUNIQUE.

4. HE THENADDED FOR ME THAT HE WANTED TO WRITE THE SOVIETS RIGHT AWAY A "THANK YOU VERY MUCH BUT I WONT NEED YOUR HELP" LETTER. HE SAID HE HOPED TO DO THIS

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BEFORE THE SOVIETS RESPONDED TO HIS OWN REQUEST TO

THEM TO RESTRUCTURE THEIR PACKAGE BY ELIMINATING SA-2 AND INCREASING THE NUMBERS OF SA-3 AND SA-6.

5. KING MENTIONED HE WOULD BE LEAVING FOR TEHRAN TOMORROW AT NOON PRECISELY LOCAL TIME AND THAT IF WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER HE COULD HOLD UP ISSUING THE COMMUNIQUE TO HIS ARMED FORCES AND WRITING THE SOVIETS UNTIL HIS RETURN. HOWEVER HE SAW SOME TACTICAL ADVANTAGE TO WRITING THE SOVIETS BEFORE THEY CAME BACK TO HIM IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN A LACK HERE OF ANY FURTHER INFORMATION FROM WASHINGTON IN THIS SOMEWHAT FAST MOVING SITUATION AS WELL AS YOUR MOST RECENT INSTRUCTIONS TO ME I OPENED UP THE POSSIBILITY WITH THE KING THAT GOING A LITTLE BIT SLOW AT THIS POINT MIGHT NOT HURT TOO MUCH. HOWEVER, THE KING IS READY TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO HIS TROOPS, TO THE SOVIETS AND OF COURSE TO US TO GO FOR THE AMERICAN PACKAGE IF WE CONTINUE TO BE PREPARED TO SELL IT TO HIM AND ARE ALSO PREPARED TO REITERATE OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SAUDIS WILL FINANCE THE DEAL. IT IS THIS LATTER PART OF THE SITUATION THAT HAS ME SOMEWHAT CONCERNED ABOUT THE KINGS MAKING A PREPATURE COMMITMENT. IF SAUDI FUNDING IS INDEED AVAILABLE, BUT IN SOME COMBINATION STRETCHED OUT OVER TIME A SITUATION WHICH MIGHT REQUIRE OUR INTERVENTION IN THE FORM OF CREDIT, ETC. I WOULD PRESUME WASHINGTON WOULD LIKE TO WRAP UP THE DETAILS WITH THE SAUDIS AND JORDAN, BEFORE THE KING BEGINS PUBLICLY COMMITTING HIMSELF OVER ALL THE PLACE, ESPEICALLY IN A FASHION THAT WILL IMPLY OUR FULL SUPPORT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES MY RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE TO TELL THE KING TO COOL IT A BIT WHILE WE TALK OVER WITH SAUDIS THE DETAILS OF THE PACKAGE AND PRESUMABLY FOR ITS FINANCING. THAT WOULD THEN PUT HIM IN A POSITION TO WRITE HIS COMMUNIQUE AND SEND HIS LETTER TO MOSCOW AFTER HIS RETURN FROM TEHRAN, ABOUT A WEEK OR SO FROM NOW. IF DEPARTMENT AND JIDDA AGREE, IT WOULD BE

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HELPFUL FOR ME TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS BY EARLY MORNING LOCAL TIME JULY 18 SO I CAN SEE THE KING BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE. WHATEVER I SAY SHOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE AN UPBEAT TONE SO WE DO NOT DESTROY THE KINGS COMMITMENT TO THE WESTERN APPROACH WHICH NOW SEEMS TO BE GALLOPING AHEAD OF OUR CAPACITY TO GET THE DETAILS IN PLACE. AS ABOVE INDICATES THERE ARE PORBABLY NOW FEW, IF ANY IMPEDIEMENTS IN THE WAY OF COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE

BY THE KING OF A US-SAUDI PACKAGE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
OF \$510-534 MILLION, THUS SATISFYING A LONG STANDING
CONDITION PRECIDENT. FINALLY AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE
THE KING WILL ALLOW ME TO DEBRIEF HIM ON VISIT HERE
THIS AFTERNOON OF KHADDAM AND TLAS WHO ARE COMING
DOWN FROM SYRIA, PRESUMABLY TO TALK ABOUT LEBANON.
END COMMENT.

7. ACTION REQUESTED. DEPARTMENTS INSTRUCTIONS BY
0800 LOCAL JULY 18 IF POSSIBLE, REGARDING WHAT IT
WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ME TO TELL THE KING ON HIS REQUEST
FOR ADVICE OVER ISSUEING A COMMUNIQUE TO HIS TROOPS
ACCEPTING THE US-SAUDI AIR DEFENSE DEAL.
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